ten years before his death. The first part, in eighteen books, was published in 1604 ; the second, third, and fourth appeared in 1606 and the two following years. The last part, which makes a total of 138 books, did not appear till 1620, under the care of the author’s friends Rigault and Dupuy, whom he had named his literary executors. The first named likewise put final touches to De Thou’s autobiography, which, also written in Latin, appears in French in most collections of French memoirs. It contains minute details of the author’s life down to 1607, mixed with rather miscellaneous descriptions of interesting places which he had visited (such as Mont St Michel, an eagle’s eyrie in Dauphiné, &c. ) ; and its com­position is said to have been partly determined by the obloquy cast by bigoted adherents of the papacy on the History. De Thou was indeed obnoxious to these on many grounds. He had helped to nego­tiate the edict of Nantes ; he had opposed the acknowledgment in France of the decrees of Trent ; he had been a steady Anti-Leaguer ; and he was accused of speaking in the History itself of Protestants and Protestantism, not merely with criminal mildness, but with something like sympathy. It is needless to say that these blots in the History have seemed beauties to later and more dispassionate students. There is no doubt that the charges of partiality on minor and mostly personal points are either disprovable or unim­portant; and the whole seems to be as fair and as carefully accurate as at such a time was possible. On the other hand, the work is undoubtedly planned and executed on much too large a scale, and the inclusion of events in foreign countries, on which the author was often but ill-informed, has not improved it. But it is clearly and on the whole excellently written, and will always be, as far as any general contemporary history can be so called, the great authority for at least the French part of its subject and period. It was first published as a whole when, as above mentioned, the last part appeared in 1620, and it was several times reprinted. More than a hundred years later, in 1733, an Englishman, Samuel Buckley, working in part on the materials of Thomas Carte, produced at London what is recognized as the standard edition of the original, in 7 vols. folio. The standard French translation was made im­mediately afterwards by a group of literary men, the best known of whom were the Abbé Desfontaines and Prévost, the author of Manon Lescaut. A choice copy of the first edition of the first part, with the arms of Henry IV. on the binding, is in the British Museum library.

THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS. The *Thousand and One Nights,* commonly known in English as *The Arabian Nights’ Entertainments,* is a collection of tales written in Arabic, which first became generally known in Europe in the early part of last century through the French translation by Antoine Galland (*q.v.*), and rapidly attained such universal popularity that it is unnecessary to describe the contents of the book. But the origin of the *Arabian Nights* claims discussion in this place. In the *Journal Asiatique* for 1827, p. 253, Von Hammer drew attention to a passage in the *Golden Meadows* of Mas'údί (ed. Barbier de Meynard, iv. 89 *sq.),* written in 943 a.d., in which certain stories current among the old Arabs are compared with “ the books which have reached us in translations from Persian, Indian, and Greek, such as the book of *Hezár Afsáne,* a title which, translated from Persian into Arabic, means ‘the thousand tales.’ This book is popularly called *The Thousand and One Nights,* and contains the story of the king and his vizier and of his daughter Shírazád and her slave girl Dínázád. Other books of the same kind are the book of *Ferza and Símás,* containing stories of Indian kings and viziers, the book of Sindibád, &c.” Von Hammer concluded that the *Thousand and One Nights* were of Persian or Indian origin. Against this conclusion De Sacy protested in a memoir *(Mém. de l'Acαd. des Inscr.,* 1833, x. 30 *sq.),* demonstrating that the character of the book we know is genuinely Arabian, and that it must have been written in Egypt at a compara­tively recent date. Von Hammer in reply adduced, in *Jour. As.,* 1839, ii. p. 175 *sq.,* a passage in the *Fihrist* (987 a.d.), which is to the following effect:—

“ The ancient Persians were the first to invent tales, and make books of them, and some of their tales were put in the mouths of animals. The Ashghanians, or third dynasty of Persian kings, and after them the Sásánians, had a special part in the development of this literature, which found Arabic translators, and was taken up by accomplished Arabic literati, who edited it and imitated it. The earliest book of the kind was the Hezár afsán or Thousand Tales, which had the following origin. A certain Persian king was accustomed to kill his wives on the morning after the consummation of the marriage. But once he married a clever princess called Shahrazád, who spent the marriage night in telling a story which in the morning reached a point so interesting that the king spared her, and asked next night for the sequel. This went on for a thousand nights, till Shahrazád had a son, and ventured to tell the king of her device. He admired her intelligence, loved her, and spared her life. In all this the princess was assisted by the king’s stewardess Dínázád. This book is said to have been written for the princess Homái (MSS. Homání), daughter of Bahman. ... It contains nearly two hundred stories, one story often occupying several nights. I have repeatedly seen the complete book, but it is really a meagre and uninteresting production” (Fihrist, ed. Flügel, p. 304).

Persian tradition (in Firdausi) makes Princess Homái the daughter and wife of Bahman Ardashír, *i.e.,* Artaxerxes I. Longimanus. She is depicted as a great builder, a kind of Persian Semiramis, and is a half-mythical personage already mentioned in the Avesta, but her legend seems to be founded on the history of Atossa and of Parysatis. Firdausi says that she was also called Shahrazád (Mohl, V. 11). This name and that of Dínázád both occur in what Mas'údí tells of her. According to him, Shahrazád was Homái’s mother (ii. 129), a Jewess (ii. 123). Bahman had married a Jewess (i. 118), who was instrumental in delivering her nation from captivity. In ii. 122 this Jewish maiden who did her people this service is called Dímázád, but “ the accounts,” says our author, “ vary.” Plainly she is the Esther of Jewish story. Tabari (i. 688) calls Esther the mother of Bahman, and, like Firdausi, gives to Homái the name of Shahrazád. The story of Esther and that of the original *Nights* have in fact one main feature in common. In the former the king is offended with his wife, and divorces her ; in the *Arabian Nights* he finds her unfaithful, and kills her. But both stories agree that thereafter a new wife was brought to him every night, and on the morrow passed into the second house of the women (Esther), or was slain *(Nights).* At length Esther or Shahrazád wins his heart and becomes queen. The issue in the Jewish story is that Esther saves her people ; in the *Nights* the gainers are “ the daughters of the Moslems,” but the old story had, of course, some other word than “ Moslems.” Esther’s foster-father be­comes vizier, and Shahrazád’s father is also vizier. Shah- razád’s plan is helped forward in the *Nights* by Dínázád, who is, according to Mas'údí, her slave girl, or, according to other MSS., her nurse, and, according to the *Fihrist,* the king’s stewardess. The last account comes nearest to Esther ii. 15, where Esther gains the favour of the king’s chamberlain, keeper of the women. It is also to be noted that Ahasuerus is read to at night when he cannot sleep (Esther vi. 1). And it is just possible that it is worth notice that, though the name of Ahasuerus corresponds to Xerxes, Josephus identifies him with Artaxerxes I.

Now it may be taken as admitted that the book of Esther was written in Persia, or by one who had lived in Persia, and not earlier than the 3d century B.c. If now there is real weight in the points of contact between this story and the *Arabian Nights—*and the points of difference cannot be held to outweigh the resemblances between two legends, each of which is necessarily so far removed from the hypothetical common source—the inference is import­ant for both stories. On the one hand, it appears that (at least in part) the book of Esther draws on a Persian source ; on the other hand, it becomes probable that the *Nights* are older than the Sásánian period, to which Lane, iii. 677, refers them.

It is a piece of good fortune that Mas'údí and the *Fihrist* give us the information cited above. For in general the Moslems, though very fond of stories, are ashamed to recognize them as objects of literary curiosity. In fact, the next mention of the *Nights* is found only after